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Report on Central Business District. Columbus, Georgia

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REPORT ON
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

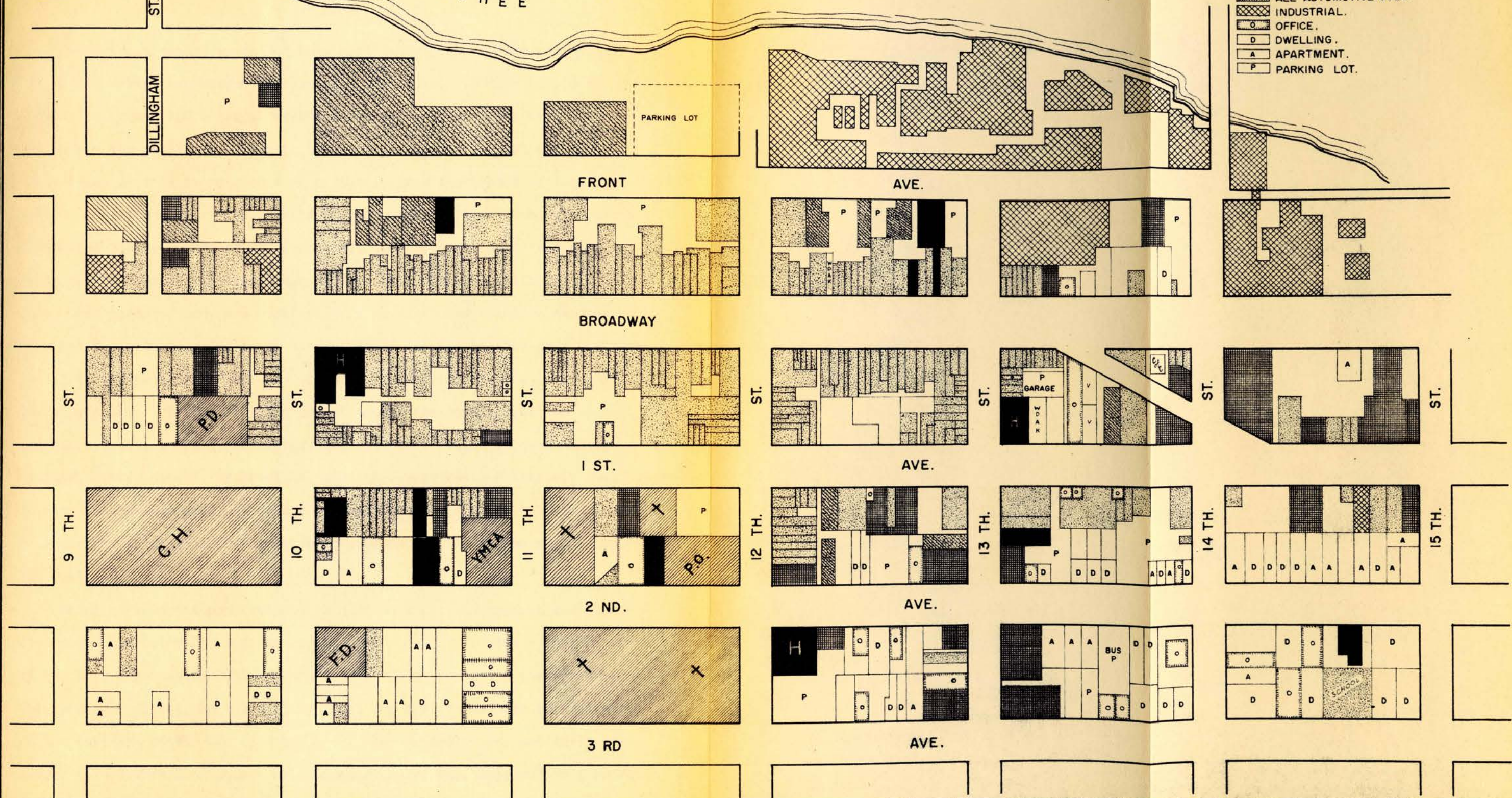
Prepared for

Downtown Improvement Association

by

George W. Simons, Jr.

Planning Consultant



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EXISTING LAND USES OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA.

HISTORICAL

In the past twenty years but more particularly during the past decade the United States has become increasingly urbanized. In this period of population growth and enlarged economic activity, urban areas have extended far beyond the political corporate boundaries of their central cities. In recognition of this trend resulting primarily from the impact of the automobile, the extension of improved highways and liberalized housing programs, the United States Bureau of the Census has created new classifications known as the Urban and Metropolitan Areas. This characteristic growth of cities has produced many new problems of a physical and economic nature, among which are those relating to the future of the Central Business District.

From its beginning, the Central Business District has been the heart of the city's life. Within it the greatest number and diversification of economic activities are concentrated, i. e., retail outlets, governmental offices, banks, hotels, professional and other services. Relatively small in extent, when compared with the corporate or urban areas, it is the site of the greatest single concentration of daytime population and of the highest real estate values.

Prior to 1920 the population growth of Columbus was gradual and steadily upward but not phenomenal as it has been since 1920. The corporate area of the city encompassed 3.5 square miles in 1920, bounded on the north by Thirty-Second Street, on the east by Tenth and Twelfth Avenues and the river on the west and south. In 1920 and 1948, the corporate area was again enlarged to 4.3 and 12.62 square miles respectively, and, pursuant to a recent referendum it will be extended to comprehend 26.9 square miles as of December 31, 1958.

The improved economic status of the people generally was mirrored in the increased usage of the automobile and also, in a desire of the people to live at points remote from their places of employment. The invasion of commercial enterprises into the older residential areas intensified the movement to the periphery and beyond which became more pronounced within the past decade. An examination of the various subdivisions that have been developed in the peripheral areas is testimony to the magnitude and nature of the movement.

In these years of growth and expansion businesses of various kinds were established along some of the principal highways at strategic intersections or in the vicinity of industrial operations but notwithstanding, the Central Business District continued to be recognized as the chief commercial and servicing center of all the people of the city and its tributary area. It was the one dominant place to which people traveled periodically to satisfy their many wants and needs.

Obviously, the automobile and improved highways have been the most significant factors shaping the expansion of cities and the areas contiguous to them. The automobile has also contributed substantially to changes in the land use pattern of cities, in the creation of new commercial centers and to the methods of doing business. Whereas in 1944 there were only 15,536 passenger automobiles registered in Muscogee County, in 1950 there were 23,869 (one for every five people) and in 1957, 44,945 (one for about every three people) - a three-fold increase in thirteen years.

In the expansion and development of the urban area many new neighborhoods were created or older ones enlarged. These increasing settlements of

people inspired first the establishment of small neighborhood shopping centers such as are found in the Wynnton School and Saint Elmo areas. These developments were later augmented by the Supermarket and more recently by the enlarged Shopping Center - a comparatively new creation. The latter type of development with its various and diversified retail and servicing outlets built around a large parking area has stimulated the property owners and businesses of the Central Business District to consider and initiate measures to preserve and initiate measures to preserve and improve the character and functions of the Central Business District. What should be done to preserve and enhance its value, integrity and attractiveness?

THE SHOPPING CENTER

Shopping Centers are the direct result of peripheral population growth, providing a market place principally for the so-called convenience goods. In one form or another decentralized commercial centers have existed in metropolitan areas for many years. Reference has been made above to the Wynnton Road and Saint Elmo centers. So basically, the decentralization of convenience goods establishments is not new. The grouping together of businesses in an architecturally planned unit with large areas for the free parking of customers, is the principal new feature of the Shopping Center.

Research studies conducted in diverse areas of the nation prove that as a city expands and new neighborhoods of people are created a proportionately greater amount of retail business is done in areas away from the center. Not since Columbus was small and the Central Business District was the sole retail and servicing center has its volume of business approached one hundred per cent. As one authority has emphasized: "For at least eighty years decentralization as such has progressed to very great limits. Studies in Baltimore and Philadelphia in 1926 indicated that in both cities, more than 65% of the total retail trade was done outside the Central Business District. In cities of 50,000 or thereabouts, at least thirty per cent of the total retail trade is done in suburban districts".

The following table from studies of Central Business District of Atlanta made by the United States Bureau of the Census is typical of what is taking place in urban areas:

	<u>1954</u>		<u>1948</u>	
	<u>NUMBER OF ESTABLISH- MENTS</u>	<u>TOTAL SALES (000)</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ESTABLISH- MENTS</u>	<u>TOTAL SALES (000)</u>
City as a Whole	4,340	\$753,489	3,552	\$528,446
Central Business District	891	263,191	919	254,063
CBD (percent)	20.6	35	25.8	48.2

Whereas the number of establishments and the volume of business done percentage wise decreased in the Central Business District, the dollar volume of business in the Central Business District increased. In this instance the Central Business District experienced a seven per cent decline between 1948 and 1954, in an area where many convenience centers have been established. The experience at Savannah was similar.

In evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the Central Business District and the Shopping Center, experience crystallized from numerous studies reveals the following.

A. ADVANTAGES OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

1. It is accessible and available to more people than any other area.
2. In it one can do several errands at one time.
3. In it one can find a greater selection of goods to choose from.
4. Prices are generally cheaper.
5. It is a center of reciprocal relationships between activities and structures and interactions between groups and people.
6. It affords the prestige of a Central Business District address.
7. It is the site of the largest concentration of daytime population, a potential market and purchasing power.
8. It is adjacent to industrial and wholesale distribution establishments which also provide potential markets.
9. It is the focus of intra-city and inter-urban transportation facilities.
10. It is at the cross roads of inter-state and inter-region traffic.

B. DISADVANTAGES OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

1. It presents difficulties and cost of parking.
2. It is often crowded.
3. It is plagued with traffic congestion.
4. There are inadequacies of mass transportation.
5. It is surrounded by areas of deterioration and blight.
6. There is a lack of attractiveness and those amenities that appeal to people.
7. There is a lack of effective merchandising techniques.
8. One has to walk too far from parking facilities to the seat of business transactions or shopping.
9. There is too much competition between pedestrian and automobile.

C. ADVANTAGES OF THE REGIONAL OR NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING CENTER

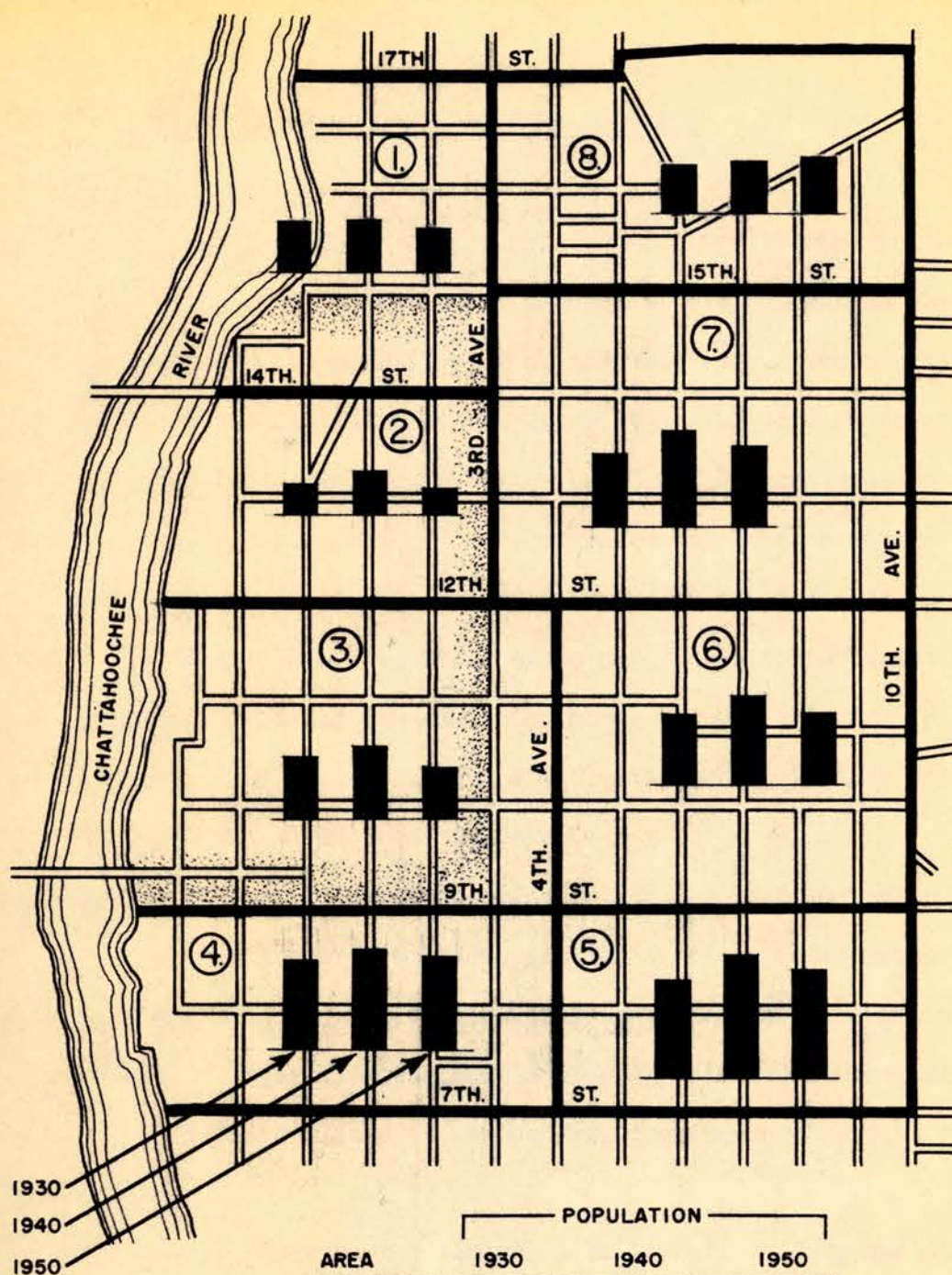
1. Free and adequate parking.
2. Close proximity to homes to be served.
3. Store hours are more convenient to customers.
4. They are attractive and shelter the customer from the weather.

D. DISADVANTAGES OF THE REGIONAL OR NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING CENTER

1. The selection of goods, primarily convenience goods as opposed to shoppers goods, is limited.
2. Competition is restricted.
3. Prices are usually higher.

From these advantages and disadvantages certain deficiencies of the Central Business District are apparent.

Those interested in preserving the prestige and importance of the Central Business District must strive to attain, or at least approach, the advantages offered by the Shopping Center, notably its parking provisions. A bold endeavor should also be made to enhance the attractiveness and appeal of the Central Business District by various means. The latter could even include the possibility of gradually rebuilding the Central Business District into a spacious, architecturally harmonious unit thereby creating an enlarged, centralized Shopping Center with all the attractiveness and amenities offered by it.



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POPULATION CHANGES IN THE CENTRAL AREA OF
 COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
 1930-1940-1950

FIGURE 1.

DEFINITION OF CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Every person has his own concept of what constitutes the Central Business District. In the final analysis all concepts would comprehend the same general area surrounded only by different boundaries. The State Highway Department has defined the Central Business District as that area between Ninth Street on the south, Fifteenth Street on the north and Fourth Avenue on the east. Mr. Lochner, in his report of 1947, extended the area northward to Sixteenth Street, but terminated it at Third Avenue on the east. For purposes of this study the Central Business District is defined as the area between Ninth and Fifteenth Streets on the south and north respectively and Third Avenue on the east, within which are found the varied and principal activities identified with the Central Business District.

Contiguous to the Central Business District on the east and extending to Fifth Avenue is an area formerly residential in character, interspersed with various types of commercial, servicing, professional and semi-industrial enterprises. Many of these fringe operations occupy old residential structures but many are still utilized as residences, rooming and boarding houses and apartments.

The change taking place in the central area is reflected by variations in its population since 1930. In the decade 1930-1940 the population of the enlarged area increased 1,756 (Figure 1) but in the decade 1940-1950, it decreased 1,566 and from current indications the 1960 population will reflect a still further decrease. The population of the Central Business District, as defined herein, decreased 653 in the decade 1940-1950.

Because of the transition taking place within the central area - from residential to commercial - no new residential structures are being erected therein and many of the older residential structures are showing evidences of blight and deterioration.

AREA OF DISTRICT

The Central Business District as here conceived comprises some 217 acres of land (0.03% of the corporate area) of which 85.17 acres or 39% is devoted to streets. The net area of land for utilization is therefore about 132 acres. Altho commercial and servicing activities of one kind or another are scattered thruout the district, Broadway is the focal point of retail activity, from Ninth Street on the south to Fourteenth Street on the north. Front Street, to the west of Broadway, now devoted principally to warehousing and manufacturing, is so closely identified with Broadway activities that in any expansion or improvement program it will become an integral part of the Central Business District. Next to Broadway, Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets are especially important east-west streets, the latter as a feeder into the Central Business District from the east. Neither Twelfth or Thirteenth Streets however are yet comparable in their retail characteristics, to Broadway. First, Second and Third Avenues are currently of secondary importance as commercial thorofares but notwithstanding they present opportunities in any expansion of Broadway activities.

The entrance to Kirven's on First Avenue, the removal of White's from Broadway and the erection of the two new banks at Thirteenth Street are indicative of the trend to broaden the retail base of the Central Business District and to utilize more advantageously the frontages of First Avenue.

Two blocks centrally located within the defined area, bounded by First and Third Avenues and Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, will doubtless influence the types of future land uses in the area surrounding them. One entire block is occupied by the Baptist and Methodist churches and their accessory uses and the other immediately to the west, by the First Presbyterian and Trinity

Episcopal church, the Masonic Temple and the United States Federal Building. This grouping of public and semi-public uses virtually constitutes a civic center that will tend to direct future retail activity into First Street and Third Avenue north of Twelfth Street and also westward from First Avenue along Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets. Already activity in the Thirteenth Street area is noticeable.

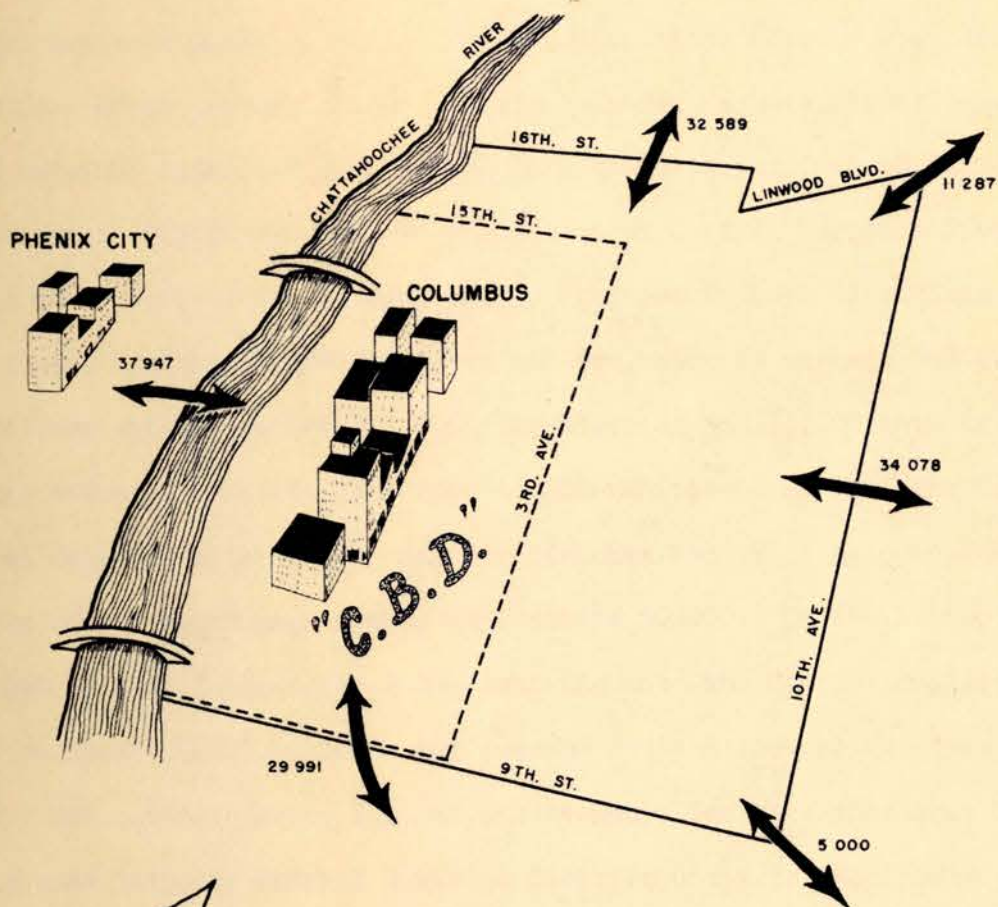
Altho many new structures have been erected in the past decade and many "face lifting" jobs have been made to improve the appearance of the central area, there still remain many structures reminiscent of an older era, which sooner or later will give way to modernization. In the planning of new structures to replace the more ancient ones thought should be directed toward those structural types that will impart to the area as a whole - and more particularly to Broadway - an architectural harmony now lacking.

ACCESSIBILITY OF CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Located on the east shore of the Chattahoochee River the Central Business District is accessible from its tributary urban and metropolitan areas by a number of radial highways in Georgia and by two bridges into Alabama. Recently the new expressway from the north and northeast into Fourth Avenue has been opened. Thirteenth Street, Linwood Boulevard, Wynnton and Buena Vista Roads are the principal entrances from the east and, Cusseta Road and Victory Drive from the south and southeast. Tenth Avenue is an important north-south collector street east of the Central of Georgia tracks and Sixth Avenue, west thereof. The principal impediment to the east-west traffic flow is the Eleventh Street subway from the intersection of Tenth Avenue and Wynnton Road and the dead end intersection at Sixth Avenue. From the south, traffic originating in the Benning area, Baker Village and other points to the south and southeast is distributed from Victory Drive into either Tenth, Sixth, Fourth Avenues or Broadway. U. S. 27 and 280 from North to south thru Columbus are routed via Victory Drive, Fourth Avenue and the Fourteenth Street bridge; U. S. 80 from east to west is routed via Wynnton Road, Buena Vista, Thirteenth Street, Fourth Avenue and Fourteenth Street and U. S. 80, 431 and 280 use the Fourteenth Street bridge into Alabama. All these highways serve the Central Business District. Much of the traffic volume now passing thru the Central Business District will be reduced by the construction of the proposed new bridge in the south part of the city. The traffic flow from the east will also be facilitated when the proposed Tenth Street viaduct from Wynnton Road has been completed.

The north-south movement of traffic will be improved greatly by the Fifth Street widening now under way. This street, with Fourth, will constitute elements of a one-way system thru the city.

Traffic movements into and thru the Central Business District are of prime importance. Many people who would prefer to shop and do business within the district now avoid it because of traffic congestion, difficulties of circulation and parking. At present a considerable portion of the thru traffic between points east and west of the river contribute to congestion.



A TOTAL OF 150,892 VEHICLES ENTER AND LEAVE THIS AREA DAILY

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VOLUME OF TRAFFIC ENTERING AND LEAVING THE "C.B.D." DURING AN AVERAGE DAY

(FROM O. AND D. STUDIES - GEORGIA HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT 1954)

FIGURE 2.

TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS AND PEOPLE

Origin and destination studies conducted by the Georgia Highway Department show that on an average day some 151,000 motor vehicles cross the Central Business District cordon in both directions (Figure 2), including thru traffic which exceeds 11,000 vehicles per day in both directions. The volume of external traffic flow into and thru the district in both directions approximates 86,000 vehicles so the volume of Central Business District traffic on an average day exceeds 66,000 vehicles in both directions. This includes however 11,200 trips, to and fro, made by workers and executives employed within the Central Business District and 11,000 thru trips which when deducted indicate that some 43,800 vehicles came into the Central Business District each average day for business and shopping purposes. Today this number would more nearly approximate 50,000. On the assumption that these two way trips reflect the entrance into the Central Business District of at least 25,000 vehicles per average day and the further assumption that each vehicle transports 1.5 persons it would indicate that some 37,500 people come into the Central Business District daily to shop and do business.

In addition to the 37,500 people who come into the Central Business District daily to shop and do business, there are 9,000 workers and executives who daily travel in 5,600 vehicles. And further, there are some 12,000 people who travel into the district each average day by mass transportation, many to work within the Central Business District or in the areas contiguous to it. Of these, many also come to shop and do business.

Recapitulating then, one can readily see that there are some 50,000 or more people per average day entering the Central Business District or areas immediately contiguous to it to work, transact business, shop, eat, attend meetings and be entertained and this does not include the many who walk into the district.

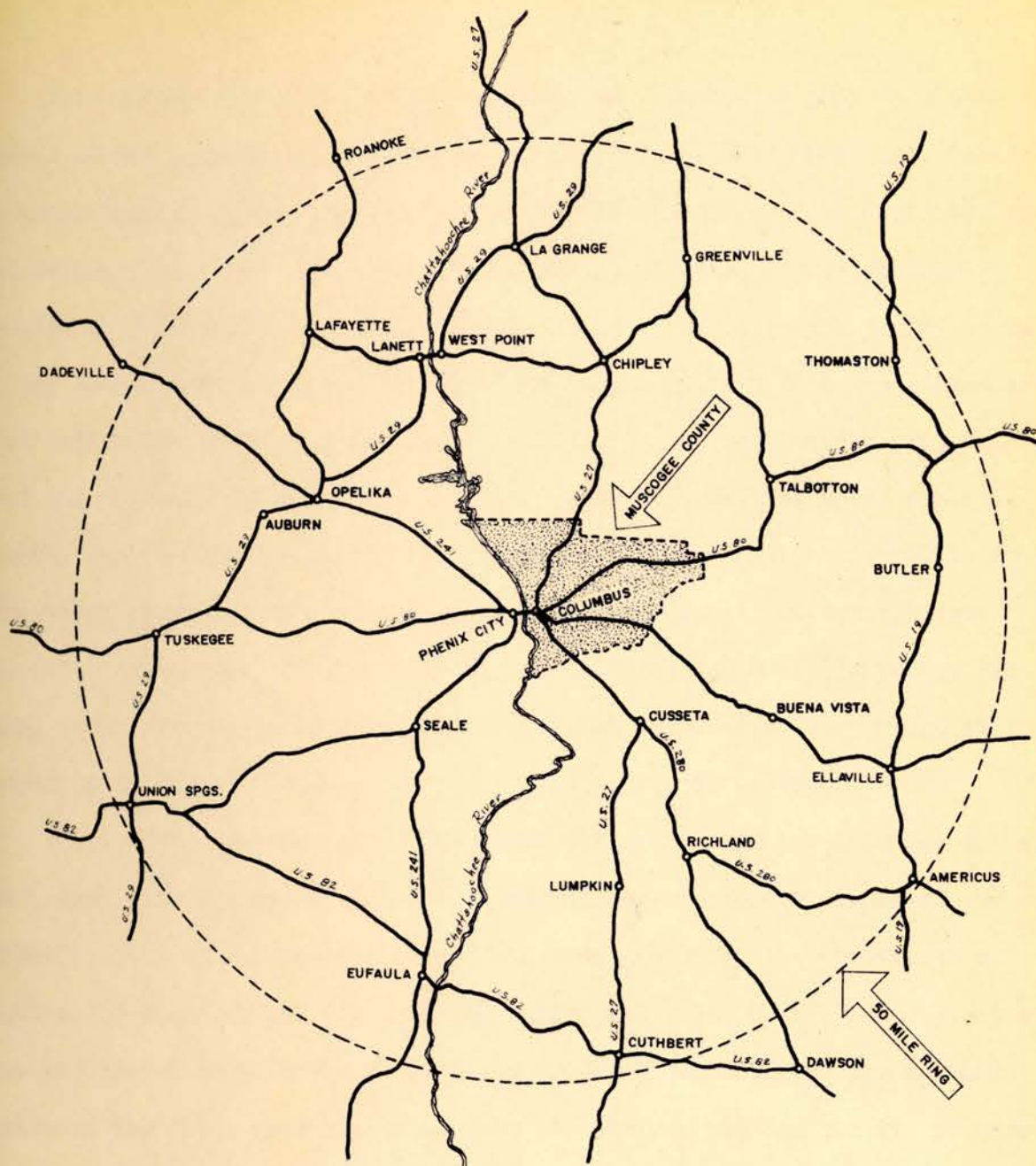
The foregoing analysis proves the contention that the Central Business District is a great reservoir of people each of whom is a potential customer. More people are attracted to it daily than to any other commercial area and, as the city and its tributary areas increase in population and economic enhancement still more people and cars can be anticipated.

THE MARKET POTENTIAL OF COLUMBUS

Any plans for the future expansion and improvement of the Central Business District should consider the increasing importance of Columbus as a regional marketing, servicing and industrial center. As the population of Columbus and its tributary marketing area increases and their respective economic opportunities improve, the importance and serviceability of the Central Business District will assume new proportions. Columbus, including Fort Benning as an industrial plant, is an industrial center of national importance; its products find a national if not international market. Similarly, the immediate area served by Columbus is one of diverse resources and productivity both on farm and in factory.

The geographical location of Columbus on rail, highway and air lines, with a goodly supply of labor and conveniently placed industrial sites will continue to attract new industrial and distribution operations. And, this position will be strengthened by the proposed river improvements and the development of port facilities. All these potentials favorable to growth and economic improvement will be reflected in a growing importance of Columbus as a dominant cultural, trading and industrial center.

The major cities competing with Columbus are Atlanta and Macon, in Georgia, and Montgomery in Alabama, of which Atlanta is the most important. Fortunately the marketing and servicing area of Columbus is extensive before it conflicts with similar areas of the other major cities. Altho the wholesale distribution facilities of Columbus successfully invade other major areas, the city is confronted with the necessity of counteracting the retail and servicing "pull" of Atlanta from within its own urban area.



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AREA TRIBUTARY TO COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
 WITHIN A RADIUS OF 50 MILES

FIGURE 3.

The trading area immediately tributary to Columbus is that area encompassed within a radius of fifty miles (Figure 3) including Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Harris, Talbot and Marian Counties in Georgia, and in Alabama, Lee and Russell Counties. The population of these counties increased from 144,498 in 1920 to 239,087 in 1950 - an increase of 65% in the thirty years. In the decade 1940-1950, the increase was 26.2%. Within this trade area are such cities and towns as West Point, Chipley, Talbotton, Buena Vista, Cuthbert and Americus in Georgia and Eufala, Union Springs, Tuskegee, Auburn, Opelika and communities in the Chattahoochee Valley, in Alabama. It is an area identified with manufacturing, agriculture, education, transportation and other resources. In Muscogee County, Georgia, and Russell County, Alabama, there are currently some 50,000 families whose effective buying income according to Sales Management as of May, 1957, was \$290,535,000.

Altho there are many small populated centers within the Columbus trade area, each with its own compliment of stores and shops, the people of the area generally look to Columbus as their "big town" to which they travel to do their major shopping and for many other purposes. The number of people however who travel to Columbus to shop and transact business and the maximum limits of the trade area will depend on (1) the variety and quality of goods and services offered; (2) the extent and kind of sales promotion engaged in; (3) the type of good will and courtesy extended; (4) the attractiveness and appeal of the various business establishments; (5) the ease of accessibility and traffic circulation and (6) the adequacy and cost of parking.

COMPOSITION AND CHARACTER OF CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Within the Central Business District there are in excess of 250 retail, servicing and financial enterprises and 325 offices, exclusive of governmental and semi-public institutions (churches, clubs, lodges, etc.). There are also 37 apartment structures, rooming houses and hotels. Along both sides of Broadway and in the area contiguous thereto is found the greatest concentration of activity, also the highest intensity of pedestrian and vehicular traffic movements. The point of maximum intensity is Twelfth and Broadway.

Of the three million square feet of floor space utilized for sales and storage purposes, 41.3% (1,241,782 square feet) is devoted to retail sales and 45.5% (1,368,946 square feet), to storage of various kinds. More than 340,000 square feet of floor space is used for office purposes in connection with business operations, exclusive of that utilized by governmental and semi-public offices. On the basis of a population of 150,000 there are about 8.3 square feet of retail floor space per capita.

The many structural changes and improvements made within the Central Business District during the past decade and the expansion of its various facilities not only reflect the population growth of the area but its growing value and importance to the people as a trading and servicing center. In this decade the Davison store building was erected, Kirven's store was enlarged and modernized, the new structures of the First and Fourth National Banks were built and the building of the Columbus Bank and Trust Company is in its final stages of completion. New office and servicing structures have

also been built on Second Avenue and on Thirteenth Street and in the fringe area surrounding the defined district. But despite these various improvements many of the structures within the district built in the '80's or before, are aged and obsolete.

Fortunately the Central Business District is served by a street system of spacious proportions. The initial plat of Columbus laid out by the State of Georgia in 1827 provided Broadway with a width of 164 feet now divided into two 45 foot roadways and a center parkway of 40 feet. First, Second and Third Avenues are 132 feet wide and the remaining streets have widths of 99 feet.

The Central Business Districts of cities generally are areas of highest assessed value. This relative position in the tax structure of the city emphasizes the necessity of preserving and improving its usefulness in the economic pattern of the city. It is interesting to observe that the assessed valuation of land and buildings within the Central Business District amounts to 38.7% of the assessed valuation of the corporate area of the city or stated otherwise, about 2.6% of the corporate area is responsible for 38.7% of the ad valorem tax load.

The Central Business District is not solely the site of manifold competitive enterprises supplying the needs and services of people, but it is the source of the largest labor roll to be found anywhere within the area. More than 9,300 people come into the district daily to work as employee, official or executive and further, these workers use approximately 5,000 automobiles in going to and fro to work. These figures are exclusive of the night shifts of the Eagle Phenix Mills and the Muscogee Manufacturing Company.

SUMMARY

The automobile has contributed immeasurably to the economic importance, growth and development of Columbus. Its impact has been responsible for the expanding urban area extending beyond the corporate limits, which to all intents and purposes is an integral part of the city. The automobile has also changed the living and trading habits of the people.

The network of improved highways has broadened the area of the city's economic influence enabling more people from greater distances to visit and work in the city and to utilize its various facilities, than ever before. At the heart of this activity, receiving the greatest impact is the Central Business District, the focus of the greatest concentration of day time population, the largest labor roll and the area of the most intensive movements of traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian.

The improvement in and expansion of the Central Business District thru the years reflect not only the population growth of the city and its tributary area but also, that the area is recognized by the people as their major trading and business center.

The initial planners of Columbus provided broad and spacious thoroughfares thruout the Central Business District but they were unable to anticipate a motor age with its resultant traffic problems. It was impossible for them to visualize the great volumes of motor traffic now moving into and thru the District, much of which is seeking spaces in which to park.

The volume of traffic flow into and thru the Central Business District is proportional to the number of people tributary to it. Currently the estimated population within the Metropolitan Area (Columbus - Phenix City - Fort Benning) approximates 175,000 persons with 58,000 passenger automobiles - one for every 3 persons. By 1975 the population of this area should approximate 250,000 persons with 100,000 automobiles. This growth in people and automobiles coupled with comparable growth elsewhere in the trade area, will further intensify the impact of traffic. The volume of traffic flow will increase nearly one hundred per cent over the present, depending to what extent the traffic flow pattern is altered by the several proposals of the State Road Department.

In this period of growth the Central Business District, faced by new and inevitable competitive forces, will continue as the dynamic commercial center of the metropolitan area. Its future prestige however and its further expansion and development will be contingent on how effectively the problems of traffic circulation and parking are approached and solved and, on how attractive and appealing the District is made.

PARKING

It is generally considered that three major needs are essential to the future vitality of the Central Business District - traffic circulation, an adequate supply of low cost parking facilities and attractiveness. The motorist must be able to reach and move around the district with a minimum of delay and hazard and on arrival, must be able to park within a few hundred feet of his destination. A poll of store executives conducted in two hundred cities by the National Retail Dry Goods Association has confirmed this; in 81.3% of the cases parking was listed as the first problem of concern and in 78.6%, that good circulation was of second importance. Polls conducted among shoppers and others disclosed similar conclusions.

As stated earlier, the Central Business District is the site of diversified activity; not all who park within it are shoppers. Many people are employed there and many others come into it to transact business in offices, banks and other places. Studies made in various cities, as reported by the Bureau of Public Roads and the Institute of Traffic Engineers, reveal that only twelve to twenty-five per cent of the parked cars are shoppers. In Houston, Texas, and Columbia, South Carolina, studies indicated that only nine and twenty-eight per cent of the parked cars, respectively, were shoppers. Not long ago the Chairman of the Board of Allied Stores Corporation declared that "only twenty per cent of the people on down town streets are there to shop". These data show that the parkee is undoubtedly availing himself of the opportunity to care for multiple errands while parked. This also emphasizes that providing parking facilities within the Central Business

District is not the sole responsibility of the retailer but of all the various activities operating within it, including those of government.

EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES

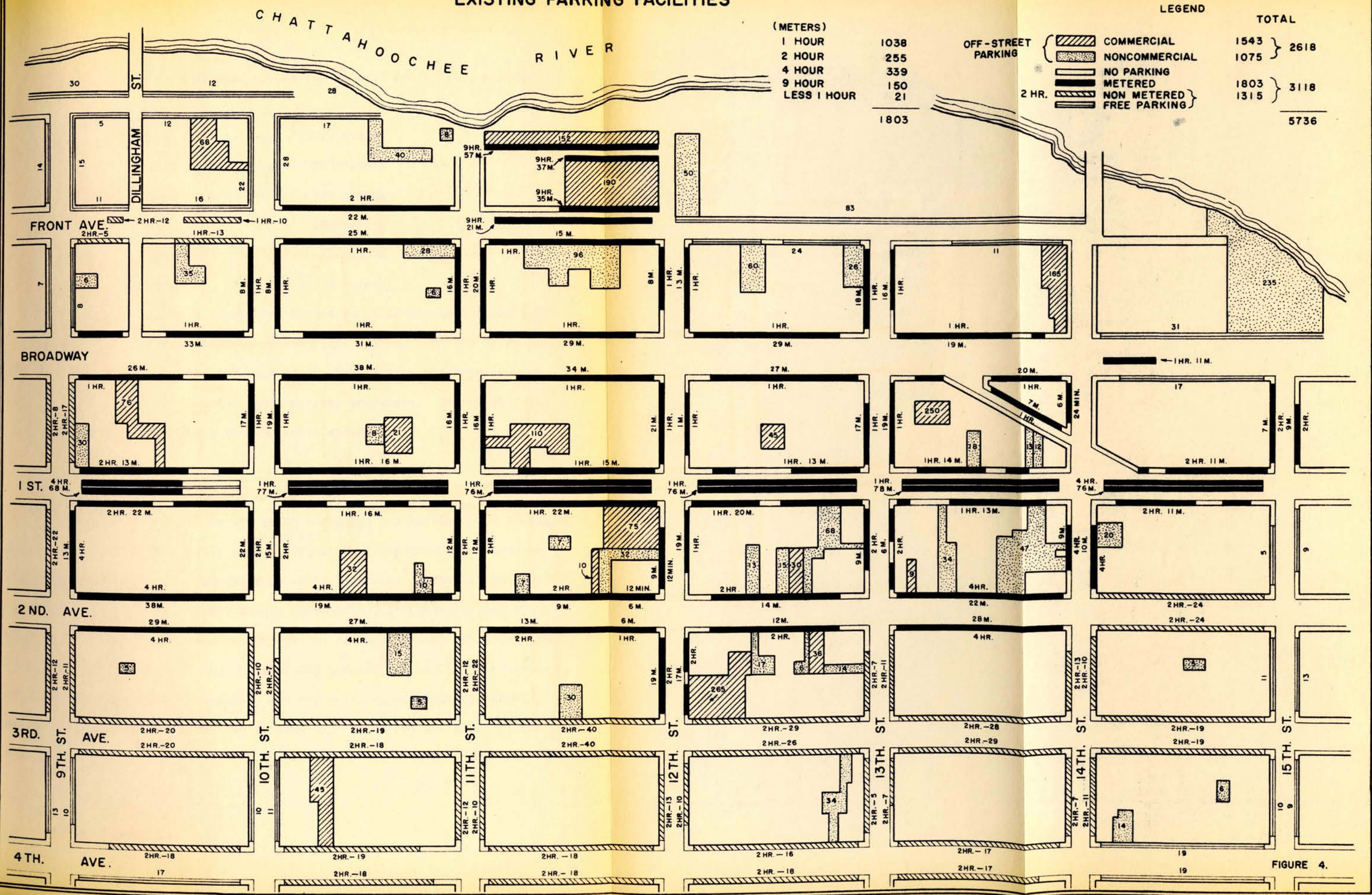
Within the Central Business District three types of parking facilities are available: (1) curb side, (2) commercial off-street and (3) non-commercial off-street. The curb side facilities are city operated and the off-street, privately operated.

The City Council of Columbus has been parking conscious for a long time and thru the years has provided a very creditable service. According to our 1947 study, 3,370 vehicles could then be parked at one time within the Central Business District. Current records indicate that now 5,839 vehicles can be parked at one time - an increase of 2,469 spaces in the decade. An inventory of parking facilities follows:

Off Street commercial lots and garages	1,579
Off Street non-commercial or private lots	1,571
<u>Total Off Street Parking Facilities</u>	3,150
Curbside and parkway spaces, metered and unmetered	2,689
TOTAL PARKING SPACES AVAILABLE	5,839

The location of these facilities and their respective capacities are shown in Figure 4.

EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES



(METERS)

1 HOUR	1038
2 HOUR	255
4 HOUR	339
9 HOUR	150
LESS 1 HOUR	21
	1803

OFF-STREET PARKING

- COMMERCIAL
- NONCOMMERCIAL
- NO PARKING
- METERED
- NON METERED
- FREE PARKING

LEGEND

TOTAL	
1543	2618
1075	
1803	3118
1315	
5736	

FIGURE 4.

Curbside and parkway metered spaces can be used for varying periods of time.

1 hour	1,019 meters
2 hours	264 meters
4 hours	339 meters
9 hours	150 meters
12 minutes	15 meters
24 minutes	6 meters

Around the Post Office corner are 15 meters of 12 minute intervals and on Fourteenth Street between Broadway and First Avenue, 6 meters of 24 minute intervals. Thruout the District however one hour meters predominate.

As one recedes from the core the time interval increases. Surrounding the Central Business District are the unmetered spaces.

METERED OPERATION

The purpose of parking meters is to encourage the multiple use of space during the day. Theoretically a one hour metered space should accomodate at least eight cars per day assuming each vehicle remains one hour. In other words the 1,019 one hour spaces should accomodate 8,152 vehicles per eight hour day. A survey conducted by the city on Friday and Saturday, just prior to Easter, 1957, disclosed that none of the metered spaces in the central district were operating to capacity and observations made during recent months also show the availability of many open spaces at all hours of the day.

The efficiency of meter operation depends to a great degree on the honor of the parker and the effectiveness of police patrol. Unfortunately many who are employed within the district abuse the parking privilege and thereby defeat the purpose of the meter by "nickel feeding" during the day or by shifting cars from one space to another. Theoretically the metered spaces within the Central Business District should accomodate more than 10,000 vehicles per day and the non-metered zones an additional 2,392 vehicles. Therefore on the assumption that every person who parks observes the regulations, 13,244 vehicles can be accomodated per day curbside or along parkways.

COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

Altho commercial and non-commercial lots can park approximately 3,150 vehicles at one time, it is difficult to determine how many are actually accomodated during an average day because of the varying turnover. In non-commercial lots a number of spaces are usually allocated to workers or executives for all day parking, the remainder are available to customers or others. This is also true in commercial lots; some spaces are rented or leased for all day use. In commercial lots however the turnover of transients will approximate 1.6 cars per space per day. Commercial lots in Columbus should accomodate some 2,500 vehicles per day and non-commercial lots about 2,000. So under the most favorable conditions which are seldom met, the Central Business District can currently accomodate about 18,000 cars per eight hour day - which is a very creditable number.

Shoppers and others who come to the Central Business District follow a pattern having a peak in the morning around 10:00 - 11:00 o'clock and a second peak in the afternoon about 3:00 o'clock. Before and between these two peak periods parking spaces are more plentiful. On special sales days pay days or during the Christmas holiday season the demand for parking space is exceptional. Planning facilities to adequately meet the demands of exceptional periods would be unwise because of their infrequent occurrences.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to state definitely the absolute number of parking spaces that should be provided within the Central Business District. No one has yet come up with a specific formula but a number of approaches to a solution have been suggested.

Shopping centers provide two to three square feet of parking space for each square foot of active retail floor space, a formula that includes generous maneuvering aisles comparable to streets. A conservative requirement on a 1 : 1 ratio would require 6,200 spaces of 200 square feet each on the basis of 1,241,782 square feet of retail floor area, which exceeds the number of spaces now available. Another formula used by one of the nation's largest shopping centers is 7 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space to meet maximum needs. On the basis of the present retail floor space this would require 8,694 spaces. A third approach is based on the automobile registration in the immediate metropolitan area, 0.1 - 0.2 space per registered automobile. On the basis of 58,000 registered vehicles in Muscogee and Chattahoochee Counties in Georgia and Russell County, Alabama, the spaces required would vary from 5,775 to 11,550 with an average requirement of 8,700. On the basis of these various criteria, with 5,839 available spaces

within the Central Business District and the additional spaces available in the area contiguous thereto, Columbus has made good constructive progress in meeting the current needs.

But when the Metropolitan Area attains a population approximating 250,000 and the automobile registration approaches 100,000 one can readily see that the present supply of parking spaces will be insufficient. At such time it is conceivable that a minimum of 12,000-15,000 parking spaces should be made available. It is for this ultimate need that plans should be contemplated now.

PLANNING ESSENTIALS

In formulating a program of parking facilities for the Central Business District some fundamental determinations should be considered, to-wit: (1) the type and location of facilities; (2) the permanency of facilities; (3) accessibility and traffic circulation and (4) cost of service.

THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES

Parking facilities should be established close to the motorist's destination. Surveys have shown that in metropolitan areas of more than 100,000 people, motorists will not walk far from a parking space to their destination. In Tampa, Florida, the maximum distance is 800 feet; in Columbia, South Carolina, and Houston, Texas, it is 500 feet. In view of the fact that 80-85 per cent of the shoppers are women, walking distance is important. The distance one travels to reach the Central Business District is of little significance provided ample low cost space is available in close proximity to

the destination. Polls conducted among prospective shoppers indicate that 90% of those interviewed find parking difficult and 71% are seriously concerned over the cost of parking.

The type of facilities to be provided in the ultimate plan is also important. Streets are designed primarily as channels to accomodate moving lanes of traffic. When their capacity has been reached or when it has been restricted because of parked vehicles, congestion, delay and hazard ensues. Parked vehicles increase the friction of flow. At such a time, it may be desirable to curtail or even eliminate curbside parking so the entire roadway width can be utilized by moving traffic. Many cities have reached this point and parking has already been eliminated from certain or all streets. Within the loop district of Chicago no curb side parking is permitted. This condition may not be reached in Columbus for a long time but it is a probability that should be anticipated in the development of any overall parking program.

PERMANENCY OF FACILITIES

Many off street parking facilities are temporary. A well located and popular parking lot of today may be the site of a new building tomorrow. This is especially true in a dynamic Central Business District where general community growth motivates the expansion of the various services. In Jacksonville, as an illustration, a centrally located block now serving as a useful parking facility may ultimately be occupied by buildings and at such time parking will disappear. This condition together with the probable restriction or elimination of curbside parking emphasizes the urgency of acquiring lands in advance to meet the ultimate parking demand.

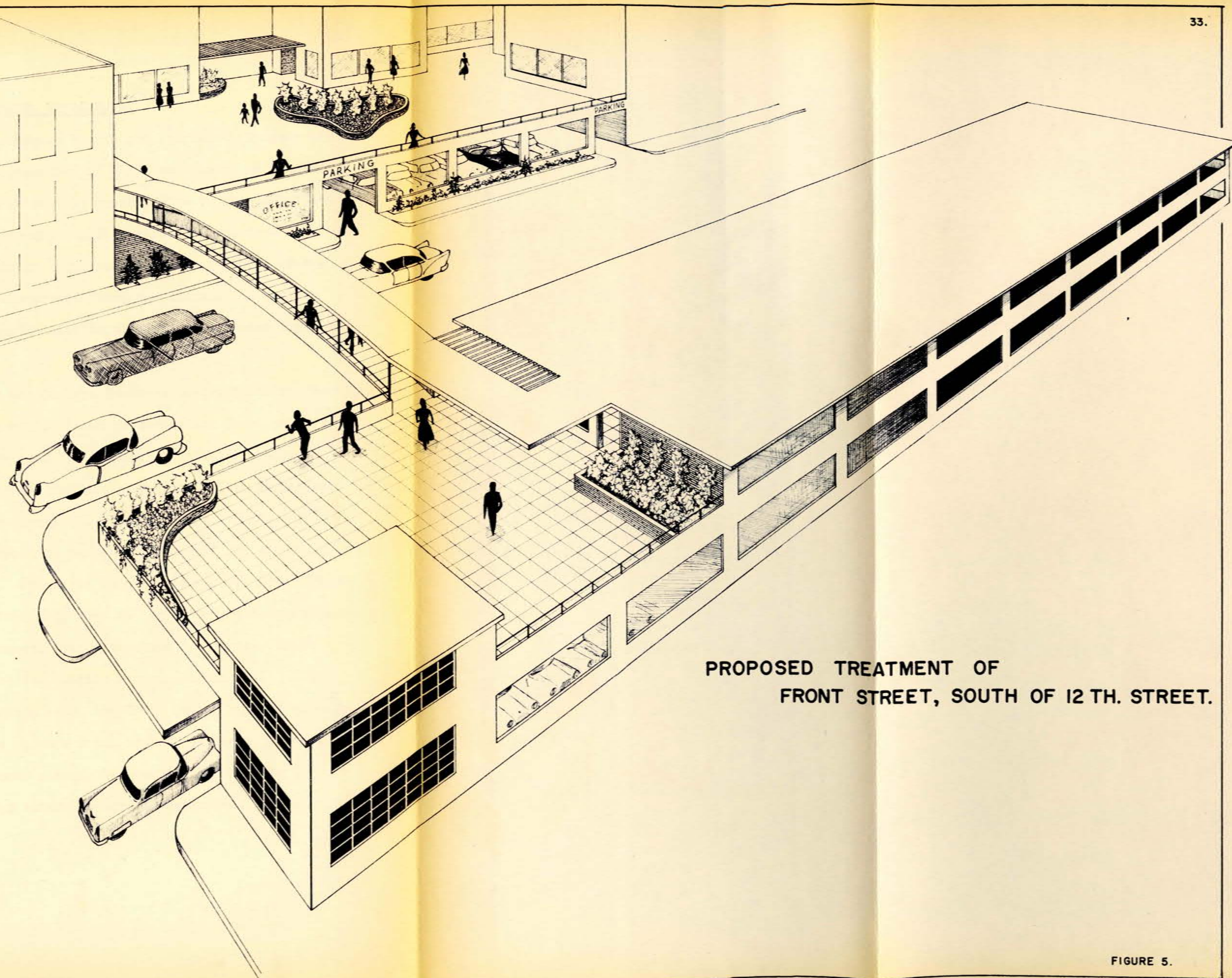
ACCESSIBILITY AND TRAFFIC FLOW

The street system of the Central Business District and the streets accessible thereto should at all times encourage a free, easy and smooth flow of traffic. Preferably the area should be enriched by a broad band or circumferential highway which as a collector from the outer areas would distribute traffic into sections where destinations are located. Around such a circumferential street and adjacent to it, parking facilities could well be located.

COST OF PARKING SERVICES

Curbside parking service is presumably furnished at a relatively low cost. The cost of off street parking is usually proportional to the distance such service is from the center. Altho Shopping Centers provide free service, few patrons expect such favors within the Central Business District. Those interested however in the welfare of the Central Business District should consider plans whereby parking costs are minimized.

The extent to which the foregoing factors are effective will depend on the growth of the area and its tributaries generally and also, on the extent to which this growth stimulates expansion and improvement. The primary objective is the improved status and usefulness of the Central Business District - what will be necessary to restore and maintain its vitality and prestige.



PROPOSED TREATMENT OF
FRONT STREET, SOUTH OF 12 TH. STREET.

PREPARED BY
GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.

STREET SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

The construction of new bridges at Fourth and Fourteenth Streets and the Lindsey Creek by-pass; the conversion of Third and Fourth or Fourth and Fifth Streets into elements of one-way traffic flow as proposed by the State Highway Department, will greatly improve traffic circulation into and within the Central Business District. By these improvements many of the cross currents of thru traffic now complicating the circulation pattern within the Central Business District will be eliminated but these improvements are not enough.

Traffic circulation within the Central Business District can be greatly improved and valuable street frontage opened to commercial development by improving and utilizing Front Street. To accomplish this, the railroad trackage should be relocated and the roadway resurfaced. This improvement will not only encourage a wider distribution of traffic movements but it will open frontages to varied types of development, retail and wholesale and also to parking facilities. Frontages on the east side of Front Street can be correlated to those on Broadway, even to the extent of converting the rears of Broadway establishments into attractive frontages. Front Street would become a new and useful traffic artery (Figure 5).

As a part of a circumferential loop, the Third Avenue roadway should be widened to encourage its use by more local traffic destined to the Central Business District. A widened roadway here would also promote the utilization of its frontages for future commercial expansion.

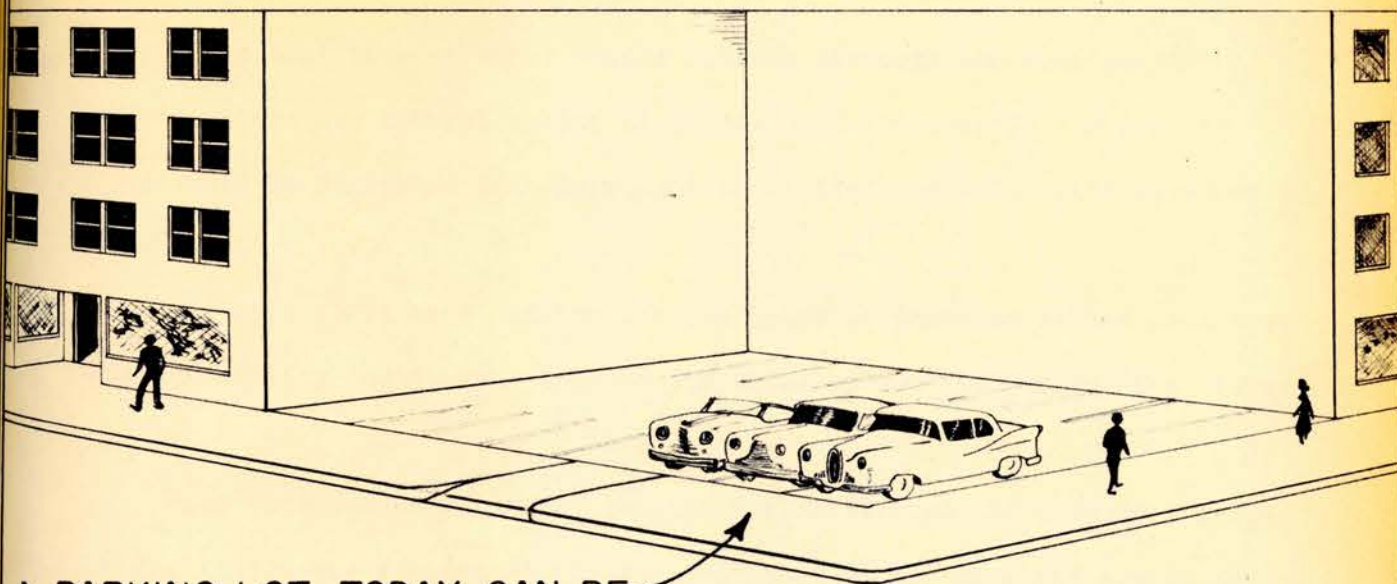
PARKING FACILITY PROGRAM

Curbside and parkway parking now practiced thruout the Central Business District should be continued until such time as the volumes of traffic require more channel flowage capacity. This time might conceivably affect some streets before it does others.

To enable more cars to park in metered spaces it would be advisable to change the present two hour zones to one hour and the four hour zones to two. It would also be advisable to install two hour meters along both sides of Third Avenue and on the unmetered sides of Ninth to Fourteenth Streets, inclusive, west of Third Avenue. The City should strictly enforce the parking regulations to minimize the abuse of meters by "nickel feeding" or space shifting. Some cities have employed women police whose sole duty it is to check violations. They have more than paid their way.

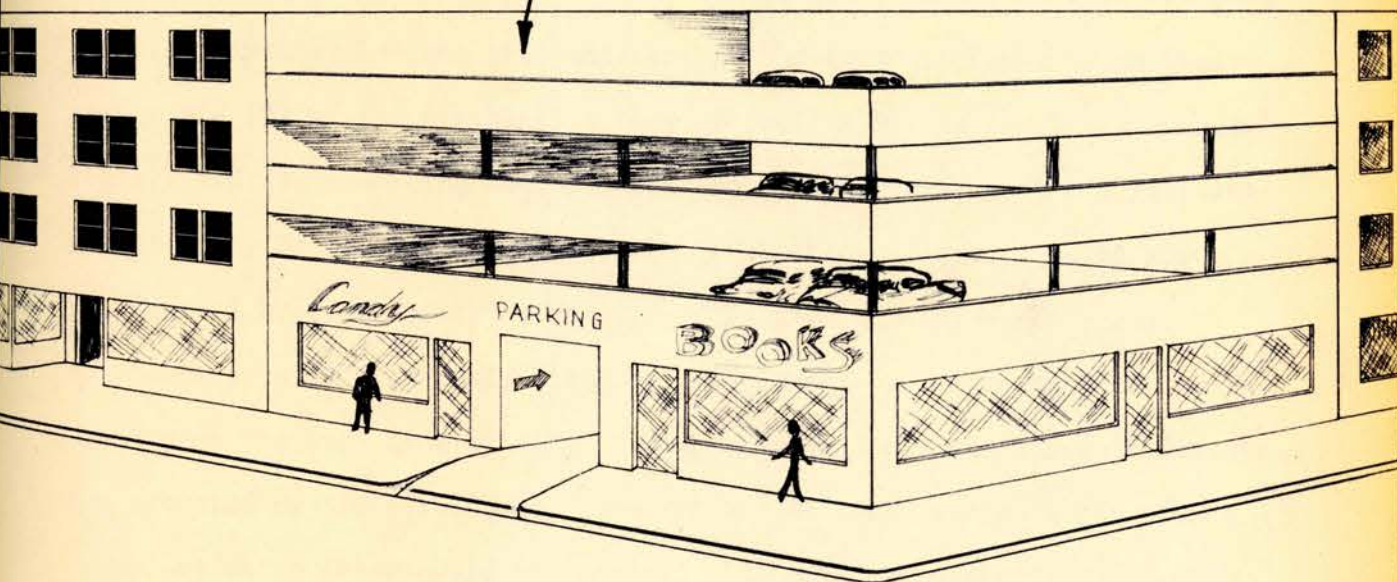
Employers should endeavor to provide parking facilities for their employees and thereby increase the number of curbside places for those desiring to park while shopping or transacting business.

Between Front and Bay Streets considerable land can be utilized for parking and for commercial frontages as stated previously. The topography of the land would permit the erection of multi-decked structures connected with the east side of Front Street by overhead walkways, thereby separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic and eliminating the uphill walk to Broadway. Retail establishments can be made a part of the parking structure. See Figure 6. Twelve to fifteen hundred parking spaces established in this area would be helpful to Broadway businesses and at the same time enhance the commercial potential of Front Street.



A PARKING LOT TODAY CAN BE

A PARKING GARAGE TOMORROW.



PREPARED BY
 GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.
 PLANNING CONSULTANT
 JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

**PARKING LOT CONVERTED INTO DECK PARKING
 STRUCTURE WITH STORES ON GROUND FLOOR.**

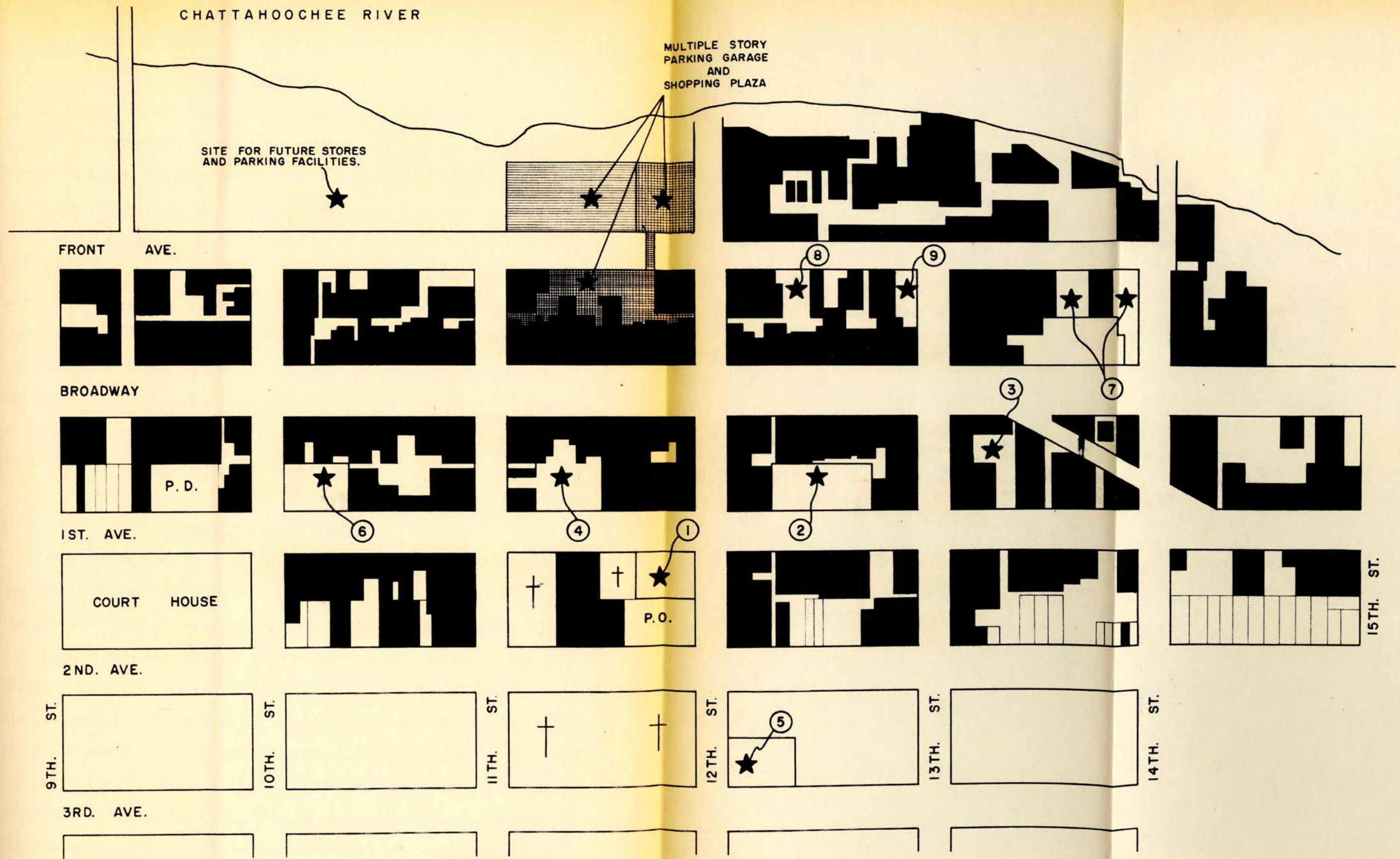
FIGURE 6.

On the east side of Front Street between Eleventh and Fourteenth Streets, there are several vacant sites now used temporarily for parking. These could be converted into permanent facilities connected with Broadway businesses.

Land used first as a parking lot can later be improved with a deck type parking facility and thereby enhance its value as a parking site (See Figure 6).

Other sites, advantageously located for development as permanent parking facilities are located at (1) the southeast corner of First Avenue and Twelfth Street (site of old Post Office, (2) the west side of First Avenue between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets formerly occupied by the Royal Oil Company, (3) the interior block north of Thirteenth Street between Broadway and First Avenue, (4) the site adjacent to and south of Kirven's on First Avenue and (5) at the northwest corner of Twelfth Street and Third Avenue. These sites are now being used for parking but currently they all fall into the category of temporary usage. Each is strategically located to serve the Central Business District and therefore should be made permanent.

Another site that could yield to improvement as a parking facility is located on the west side of First Avenue between Tenth and Eleventh Streets now occupied by old structures. The removal of these stores would open a large lot which later could be improved with a modern deck structure with stores on the ground floor. This site is close to Broadway and its improvement would enhance the whole area. East of Third Avenue between Tenth and Thirteenth Streets several sites should be acquired for use at a later date when the expansion of commercial activity reaches that area. (See Figure 7).



PROPOSED OFF-STREET PARKING SITES
FOR
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

PARK ON BROADWAY

The parkway in the center of Broadway is one of the great assets of Columbus. Within recent years it has been greatly improved and landscaped. Some people are of the opinion that this parkway should be either removed or further restricted to provide additional parking. Such conversion in our opinion would be unwise. Diagonal parking in the center of Broadway with parallel parking at the curbside would intensify congestion, hazard and confusion without satisfying substantially the parking demand. The parking of an additional number of vehicles here may alleviate the situation to a degree but it would not be commensurate with the resultant confusion and congestion. In Macon such a plan was established on Poplar Street which is comparable to First Avenue in Columbus. Cherry Street, the principal commercial street of Macon, is comparable to Broadway in Columbus.

ATTRACTIVENESS AND APPEAL

Parking is only one of the needs of the Central Business District. Its future prestige and value will depend as much on attractiveness and appeal as on parking. Many students of the Central Business District are currently of the opinion that its vitality and future value will depend on separating completely motor vehicles and pedestrians by the creation of pedestrian malls and parkways. Instead of destroying the efficacy of parks and parkways more of them are being established to enhance the attractiveness of the district and to provide areas in which the pedestrian can move about freely unobstructed by moving vehicles. This is one way the Central Business District can become an enlarged shopping center with its amenities. Plans toward this end have been developed in Fort Worth, Texas; Pasadena, Cali-



PEDESTRIAN MALL ON BROADWAY, SOUTH OF 12TH. STREET.

PREPARED BY
GEORGE W. SIMONS, JR.

fornia; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Appleton, Wisconsin and Cincinnati, Ohio. In the latter city it is proposed to convert many of the streets and plazas within the very core of the Central Business District into parks and malls for pedestrian use only.

Columbus has in its parkway the beginnings of such a pedestrian mall. Pursuing the plans being developed elsewhere, the Columbus parkway would be extended to the outer curbs leaving on both sides a limited access roadway to be used only by fire, police and ambulance services and for loading and unloading at specified early morning or night hours. This may be the ultimate solution but for the time being the parkway and roadways should remain as now (See Figure 8).

To add to the attractiveness of the parkway and incidentally to that of the street generally, it should be improved with paved plazas, benches, pools and further plantings to enhance its beauty. And further, the side walks on both sides of Broadway should be equipped with attractive marquees or shelters as protections to the pedestrians from the sun and rain, the shelters to be extended across the parkway at intervals.

One of the problems confronting the Central Business District is that of enhancing its attractiveness. Along with the erection of marquees and the further improvement of the parkway a movement should be initiated by the business interests and property owners to improve the environment aesthetically, harmonizing the architecture of the street frontages. This suggestion is made with the full realization that during the past decade many new store frontages have been constructed and new buildings have been erected but this kind of work is continually in progress. If those who con-

template new work could counsel with a central group at the inception of an idea much of the clash and brash could be avoided and ultimately a street front of pleasing proportions and appearance would result. A thing of this kind takes time but done according to a plan, results would ultimately be achieved.

Obviously, these proposals for improving the attractiveness of the Central Business District are bold and daring but notwithstanding, they are consistent with ideas and plans being considered universally. As Mr. Burnham once said in Chicago, small plans "have no magic to stir men's blood - big plans, once recorded will never die". The Central Business District of Columbus is at a point of decision and action - what is done now will determine its future course and prestige.

REACHING THE OBJECTIVE

Basic and essential to the revitalization and improvement of the Central Business District as a continuing program is a strong, interested and aggressive organization of property owners and businesses that can develop, initiate and promote plans. In many cities such organizations are now actively functioning to preserve and improve the area. One of the most active groups is the Chicago Central Area Committee that is exploring the revitalization of the "loop" district of that city. Organizations of this kind, intimately concerned about the future, can make great strides in achieving their objective.

PARKING AUTHORITY

As a result of state legislative actions in a number of states, cities have been authorized to create Parking Authorities with powers to acquire lands, construct and operate parking facilities and to issue revenue certificates to meet the costs. The membership of the Authority is appointed by the local governing body as in the case of a Housing Authority but from that point of departure the Authority acts as an autonomous body operating independently of the local government. It can conduct studies, make definitive plans, acquire properties by outright purchase or condemnation and thru its organization operate facilities. All the operations engaged in by a Parking Authority can however be performed by the city but where used, the Authority procedure functions to better advantage.

Orlando, Florida, has a Parking Authority created by special legislation. Since its inception, four lots have been acquired adjacent to the main commercial artery on one of which a two deck structure has been erected. Lots and structure are equipped with meters at the rate of five cents per hour with a three hour limit. The Orlando Authority has been in operation successfully for several years. The property acquired has not been low value and most of it was covered with structures initially. The Orlando operation shows the merits of the Authority plan.

Parking Authorities are operating in many American cities, among them San Francisco; Wilmington, Delaware; Augusta, Maine; Jersey City, New Jersey; Trenton, New Jersey; Syracuse, New York; Raleigh, North Carolina; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Knoxville, Tennessee and Norfolk, Virginia.

Some of the traits that set authorities apart from other agencies are:

1. Their capacity for action. Authorities are not in any sense advisory agencies. They are empowered to act as an independent unit on all phases of the particular function for which they are created.
2. To finance their operations, authorities are empowered to issue revenue bonds in their own names.
3. Authorities cannot levy general taxes.

MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

Cities have been in the parking business since the first parking meter was installed. They can extend and expand their services and thru a departmental operation, exercise all the functions of a Parking Authority. Miami Beach and Fort Myers, Florida, have each acquired sites, equipped them with meters and operate them. In Jacksonville, under a special legislative authorization the city issued revenue certificates, constructed and operates a river front facility accomodating 1,800 vehicles. The cost was \$4,000,000 (\$2,220 per car stall). The charges at the Jacksonville facility are twenty-five cents for the first hour and five cents for each additional hour with a maximum charge of seventy-five cents. Many other cities have acquired strategically located properties and converted them into parking facilities.

COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

Department stores and office buildings in a number of cities have equipped lots or structures adjoining their businesses for parking purposes. Altho provided primarily to service customers these facilities are also used for transient parking. Among some are Davison's and Rich's in Atlanta, Burdine's in Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, Foley's in Houston, Hecht's in Washington, D. C., and Maas Brothers at Lakeland and Saint Petersburg, Florida.

In Tampa a corporate body of merchants erected a multi-deck structure within the Central Business District. Currently Sears is preparing to erect its new store in down town Jacksonville, surrounded by a parking lot to accomodate approximately 900 cars. New office buildings and hotels now

being erected are providing parking facilities within them. The DuPont Building in Miami is an illustration of the office building with parking included, and the Netherland-Plaza in Cincinnati is a hotel with parking included.

"PARK AND SHOP" PLAN

The outstanding project initiated and operated by merchants is the "Park and Shop" enterprise of Allentown, Pennsylvania, patterned after a similar development at Oakland, California. In Allentown a small group of merchants and property owners originated the "Park and Shop" plan in 1947. They first purchased several tracts of land, raising the money by selling stock to the merchants on the basis of \$1.00 per square foot of first floor retail area of stores, payable in cash over a five year period. All lots were originally located within 1,000 feet of the center. Since 1947, this distance has been reduced to 800 feet - lots beyond 800 feet were not sufficiently remunerative. The lots were established and leased to operators with their leases allowing wholesale rates for "Park and Shop" members. With rates of twenty-five cents for four hours (since changed to two hours) and five cents for each additional hour validation of a ticket upon a minimum purchase of one dollar provided for the full twenty-five cents to be refunded to the store customer. At the end of each week, the operators were paid fifteen cents by the "Park and Shop Association" for each validated ticket, and the stores were billed in turn for twenty cents. Twelve lots are now operated by "Park and Shop" which after ten years is going strong.

The "Park and Shop" corporation has an investment in excess of one million dollars in land and buildings with more than \$500,000 in notes and mortgages. It is earning some \$25,000 per year and five years after its opening the first dividend was declared.

Other Merchant's Associations are operative at Youngstown, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Danville, Virginia; Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis, Minnesota and Oakland, California.

The foregoing illustrates what cities and organized merchants are doing thruout the country to provide parking facilities commensurate with those furnished by the Shopping Center. Altho they may differ slightly in details the pattern generally is the same. Of all the ideas used hoseover we are inclined most favorably toward the Parking Authority which seems to be in the best position to attain its objective with the least amount of obstruction and at a minimum of expense.

COSTS OF PARKING FACILITIES

Obviously the cost of parking facilities depends primarily on location and cost of land and in case of structures, on type used. In 1952, Wausau, Wisconsin, paid \$700.00 per car space for land; Garden City, Long Island, \$250.00; Topeka, Kansas, \$800.00; Minneapolis, Minnesota, \$505.00; Birmingham, Alabama, \$650.00. For parking structures, depending on the design and type the costs range from \$1,800 to \$3,000 per car space.

VALIDATION PLANS

Various plans have been devised by merchants to minimize the cost of parking to shoppers. The one used by "Park and Shop" at Allentown was presented previously.

Recently a plan proposed in Miami by the Downtown Business Council will give a shopper one hour of free parking in any garage or lot of their choice, if the tickets are validated by a participating merchant, professional or business man. If a shopper makes three purchases in three stores and returns within an hour, the facility will collect from each of the three stores. However, if the shopper desires to take the full three hours of free parking, that is his or her privilege.

SUMMARY

The various proposals made here have as their objective the general revitalization of the Central Business District. They are predicated on the assumption that Columbus and its tributary area will continue to grow and its economy will continue to improve. They recognize that the automobile has become the most important factor influencing American life, changing the patterns of cities and the habits of its people. These changes have produced the Shopping Center. But regardless, it is our firm belief that the Central Business District - by becoming an enlarged Shopping Center with all its facilities and amenities - can retain a strong position as the principal focus of commercial life and activity.

